

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method (40) for processing a video signal at a user premises comprising:
receiving (41) the video signal; and
inserting (43) a unique digital signature in a vertical blanking interval of the video signal.

2. The method (40) according to claim 1, further comprising:
inserting (42) the unique digital signature into the vertical blanking interval of the video signal when the video signal is in analog form.

3. The method (40) according to claim 1, further comprising:
inserting (42) the unique digital signature into the vertical blanking interval of the video signal before forwarding the video signal to any user equipment.

4. The method (40) according to claim 1, further comprising:
inserting (42) the unique digital signature into the vertical blanking interval of the video signal in a set-top box.

5. The method (40) according to claim 1, further comprising:
converting (43) the video signal into an analog form before inserting the unique digital signature into the vertical blanking interval of the video signal.

6. The method (40) according to claim 1, wherein the unique digital signature identifies a receiver that receives the video signal.

7. The method (40) according to claim 1, wherein the unique digital signature identifies a set-top box that receives the video signal.

8. The method (40) according to claim 1, wherein the unique digital signature includes a uniform resource locator.

9. The method (40) according to claim 1, further comprising:
displaying (44) the unique digital signature during display of the video signal by activating a teletext function of a display device.

10. A method (50) for processing a video signal comprising:
decoding (51) the video signal upon receipt;
inserting (52) a unique digital signature in a vertical blanking interval of the video signal.

11. The method (50) according to claim 10, wherein the unique digital signature identifies a decoder that receives the video signal.

12. The method (50) according to claim 10, further comprising:
converting (52) the decoded video signal into an analog format.

13. The method (50) according to claim 10, further comprising:
converting (53) the decoded video signal into a digital bit stream and inserting the unique digital signature into a place in the digital bit stream that corresponds to a vertical blanking interval of an analog video signal represented by the digital bit stream after the digital bit stream is converted into an analog format.

14. A method (50) for processing video at a user premises comprising:
decoding (51) a received digital video signal into a digital bit stream; and
inserting (53) a unique digital signature into a place in the digital bit stream that corresponds to a vertical blanking interval of an analog video signal represented by the digital bit stream after the digital bit stream is converted into an analog format.

15. The method (50) according to claim 14, further comprising:
converting (52) the digital bit stream into an analog video signal and outputting the analog video signal to a user device.

16. The method (50) according to claim 15, further comprising:
activating (54) a display of the unique digital signature during display of the video signal by activating a teletext function of a display device.

17. An apparatus (30) for processing a video signal comprising:
a processor (31) receiving the video signal and outputting a modified video signal having a vertical blanking interval, which includes a digital signature uniquely identifying the processor (31);

a memory (33) storing the digital signature; and
a teletext generator (32) coupled to the memory (33) and the processor (31) and
generating a teletext signal that includes the digital signature for insertion into the vertical
blanking interval by the processor (31) prior to the processor (31) outputting the video
signal.

18. The apparatus (30) according to claim 17, wherein the processor (31):
inserts the unique digital signature into the vertical blanking interval of the video
signal when the video signal is in analog form.

19. The apparatus (30) according to claim 17, wherein the processor (31):
converts the video signal into an analog form before inserting the unique digital
signature into the vertical blanking interval of the video signal.

20. The apparatus (30) according to claim 17, wherein the processor (31):
converts the video signal into a digital bit stream and inserts the unique digital
signature into a place in the digital bit stream that corresponds to a vertical blanking
interval of an analog video signal represented by the digital bit stream after the digital bit
stream is converted into an analog format.